

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) An operator control device for controlling an endoscope, the endoscope having an endoscope shaft, the operator control device comprising:

one or more controls for controlling the endoscope; [[and]]

~~an engaging component having a disengaged mode and engaged mode, wherein in the disengaged mode the engaging component allows the endoscope shaft and operator control device to rotate independently of one another, and in the engaged mode, the engaging component causes the endoscope shaft and the operator control device to rotate together~~ a rotating component for being coupled to a fixed feature on the endoscope shaft, the rotating component allowing rotation of the operator control device with respect to the endoscope shaft;

a trigger component for switching the operator control device between an engaged mode and a disengaged mode; and

an anti-rotating component for preventing the operator control device from rotating with respect to the endoscope shaft when the operator control device is in the engaged mode, the operator control device being allowed to rotate with respect to the endoscope shaft when the operator control device is in the disengaged mode.

2. (Currently amended) The device of Claim 1, wherein the ~~engaging component~~ operator control device has a detachment mode which allows the operator control device to be detached from the endoscope shaft for cleaning and reuse.

3. (Currently amended) The device of Claim 1, wherein the ~~engaging~~ trigger component may be manually ~~switched~~ operated to switch between the engaged mode and the disengaged mode.

4. (Currently amended) The device of Claim 1, wherein the ~~engaging~~ trigger component may be remotely ~~switched~~ operated to switch between the engaged mode and the disengaged mode.

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5-6. (Canceled)

7. (Currently amended) The device of Claim ~~[[6]]~~ 1, wherein the fixed feature on the endoscope shaft is a break-out box.

8. (Currently amended) The device of Claim 1, wherein the ~~engaging~~ rotating component comprises a collar.

9. (Currently amended) The device of Claim 8, wherein the collar is a rotating locking collar that is attached to the proximal end of ~~a break-out box~~ the fixed feature on the endoscope shaft.

10-11. (Canceled)

12. (Currently amended) The device of Claim 1, wherein the ~~engaging~~ rotating component comprises one-half of a clutch wherein the other half of the clutch is built into ~~[[a]]~~ the fixed feature on the endoscope shaft.

13. (Canceled)

14. (Currently amended) A method for orienting an operator control device relative to an endoscope shaft, the method comprising:

utilizing a rotating component to couple the operator control device to a fixed feature on the endoscope shaft;

utilizing a trigger component for disengaging the operator control device from the endoscope shaft;

rotating the endoscope shaft and operator control device relative to one another until a desired position is reached; and

utilizing the trigger component and an anti-rotating component for re-engaging the operator control device to the endoscope shaft.

15. (Canceled)

16. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 14, wherein the ~~operator control device is engaged to the endoscope shaft through a~~ rotating component comprises a collar that couples to an end of the fixed feature on the endoscope shaft.

17. (Original) The method of Claim 16, wherein the fixed feature is a break-out box.

18. (Currently amended) An endoscope system, comprising;
an endoscope with an endoscope shaft; and
a control device that can be engaged and disengaged from the endoscope shaft, the control device comprising;

one or more controls for controlling the endoscope;

a rotating component for being coupled to a fixed feature on the endoscope shaft;

a trigger component for being operated to switch the operator control device between an engaged mode and a disengaged mode; and

an anti-rotating component for preventing the operator control device from rotating with respect to the endoscope shaft when the operator control device is in the engaged mode.

19. (Currently amended) The system of Claim 18, wherein the ~~control device can be directly engaged to the endoscope shaft~~ rotating component comprises a collar.

20. (Currently amended) The system of Claim 18, wherein the ~~control device is engaged to the endoscope shaft through a~~ fixed component on the endoscope shaft comprises a break-out box.

21. (New) The device of Claim 1, wherein the anti-rotating component comprises an anti-rotation pad.

22. (New) The method of Claim 14, wherein the trigger component may be manually operated to switch between the engaged mode and the disengaged mode.

23. (New) The method of Claim 14, wherein the trigger component may be remotely operated to switch between the engaged mode and the disengaged mode.

24. (New) The system of Claim 18, wherein the anti-rotating component comprises an anti-rotation pad.

25. (New) The system of Claim 18, wherein the trigger component may be manually operated to switch between the engaged mode and the disengaged mode.

26. (New) The system of Claim 18, wherein the trigger component may be remotely operated to switch between the engaged mode and the disengaged mode.